



NEWS RELEASE

DEFENSE FINANCE AND ACCOUNTING SERVICE

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For External Release

DFAS: Making a Difference in the Community

Achieving educational goals through 'Adopt A School program'

OMAHA, Neb. (Dec. 29, 2003) – “Adopt a School,” has become a key community program for the Defense Finance and Accounting Service in Omaha. What began three years ago as a tutoring program for a local high school by DFAS Airmen, has developed into a weekly tutoring program and a monthly ‘special’ learning activity.

The program was started by Senior Airman Derek Pittak at the Omaha Highland Academy. A team of uniformed tutors goes into a “tutor pool” and works with any student who needs help once a week. Some tutors work with the same student each week to develop more continuity in learning good study habits.

“One of my primary goals was to expand the program. Through the efforts of all the volunteers we’ve been able to do that and more. I think it’s important to show our faces in the community. You should see the enthusiasm in their faces when we all walk in there in uniform,” said Pittak.

Asked about his future goals for the program Pittak said, “With the high population of English as a Second Language students, I would like to see the program develop into a mentoring and tutoring program.”

Derek coordinates closely with Miss Gwen Foxall, Highland Academy’s Principal, who has worked with the program for the last two years. “The tutors are wonderful. The students look forward to it every Friday. They really do!” said Foxall. She also pointed out that the mere presence of the military tutors benefits not only the tutoring program but also the “Character Education” and “Safe and Secure Schools” programs. “We’re very lucky to have them, and I know I can count on Senior Airman Pittak and his team every Friday. The students need this consistency.”

First Lt. James Simmons says, “Pittak is an excellent role model who has made a positive impact on his co-workers and DFAS-Omaha as a whole. In May of 2003 his

extraordinary hard work resulted in an early promotion. His attentions to his military career and community services have garnered him various other awards in the DoD Financial Management arena." He is currently enrolled in the last class needed for his Community College of the Air Force degree, and plans to earn a bachelor's degree in history. Pittak hopes to use his education and Air Force skills to become a high-school history teacher.

About DFAS

The Defense Finance and Accounting Service is the world's largest finance and accounting operation. It provides responsive, professional finance and accounting services to the men and women who defend America. In fiscal year 2003, DFAS paid about 5.9 million people, processed more than 12.3 million invoices from defense contractors, disbursed more than \$416 billion and managed more than \$197 billion

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